

Running and Cross-Country Running

by

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Health and Strength Ltd
1908

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Preface

It has often been suggested that there would be a fairly considerable demand for a book on running by some prominent modern-day pedestrian, and that, in view of the records associated to my name, it was my plain duty to supply this long-felt want.

I have hitherto resisted these kindly suggestions, as I have felt that I was possessed of the ability to write a book which anyone would particularly care to read; but persistent and quite recently increased pressure having been brought to bear, I have at last ventured to issue this book dealing with my ideas: firstly, as to how a runner should train; and secondly, how he should set about running any race for which he might be entered.

It was pointed out that, having regard to the forthcoming Olympics Games, and to the fact that the American athletes generally were anticipating a general series of triumphs in the field of sports, I, who am now debarred from competing in any pedestrian event as an amateur, may at all events assist my country's representatives with the benefits of such experience as has fallen to my lot during a fairly long and successful career.

Now it must be admitted that the results of the last few running contests between the United Kingdom and the United States have given the representatives of the latter country certain grounds for their confidence, and for that reason I have been tempted to offer these opinions of mine on running matters generally, in the hope that they may prove of some slight assistance in redressing the balance.

For I certainly am no partisan of those Jeremiahs who seem to be only too ready to bewail the decadence of British athletics, and to accept the superiority of the American pedestrian as a fact which cannot be disputed. I have myself visited most of the American running tracks, and have seen the majority of the leading athletes, with the result that the only superiority which I have discovered them to possess lies in the training methods commonly in use.

Not that I regard these as being the best in existence, for, vanity apart, I am inclined to fancy that one or two of our English trainers could give their best men several valuable points. But I must confess that the American pedestrian, as a rule, takes his sport more seriously than is the custom here. He is more highly-strung, if I may say so, and seems to set his mind more determinedly on winning than does his British rival.

That, however, is a matter of temperament, and can, I think, be more than counterbalanced by British doggedness, if this quality be only allied with common sense, practical methods of preparation.

The Briton has, I am convinced, a far greater stamina, as has been proved over and over again by our superiority in long-distance races, a superiority which our American cousins even will readily admit, once they are seriously challenged on the point.

There are not too many long-distance events on the Olympic programme, but those there are should all be annexed by British representatives if only our men will make up their

minds to do so. The Marathon race, which we have hitherto allowed to go to one or another of our rivals, should be regarded as a British preserve, as it is just the sort of race at which our men commonly excel.

The walking contest also ought to come our way, and I see no reason why we should not stand a really good chance in all pedestrian events, save, perhaps, the purely sprint races.

Sprinting is, of course, a purely natural quality, and hitherto our men would seem to have compelled to acknowledge American superiority over these sort of distances, but since the ability to sprint is more or less of an accidental quality, there is no reason why we should not discover a man who can establish new records over short distances.

This, however, is by the way, since the point I wish chiefly to impress on the athletes who may read this book is that if they wish to excel at any branch of sport they must train. Train steadily, consistently, and constantly, and always bear in mind that however well they may be doing it is still possible for them to do better.

Above all, let them train on the best lines discoverable. There are good methods of training and there are bad methods, the latter unfortunately, too often extensively patronised. My methods may not be the best, but they have always served me well, and such as they are I now place them in your service.

1 A Runner's Initial Preparation

Athletes, and writers on athletics generally, would seem to have generally agreed on a rough division of the various classes of pedestrians into three, viz.: Sprinters, middle-distance and long-distance runners.

To my mind, however, this appears to be a far too rough generalisation. For to class as sprint races all distances up to and including the quarter mile, as middle distances all from the quarter to the three-quarters, and long-distance races as being anything above that limit, would suggest, first, that a 100 yards champion ought to hold more than a fair chance as a quarter-miler, and a mile man to be invariably endowed with the same amount of stamina as a ten- or twenty-miler - propositions which will scarcely bear the test of examination.

I would, therefore, suggest as a more reasonable division the recognition of no less than five classes of running men, i.e.

- SPRINTERS - MEN capable of travelling over any distance up to 300 yards at full pelt (for I do not believe that any man can do this for a greater distance);
- QUARTER-MILERS, who are a clan apart, being sprinters possessed to some extent with almost enough stamina to become distance runners, but with greater speed than is necessary for these latter;
- SHORT-DISTANCE RUNNERS, i.e. racers who are best suited to any distance from the quarter to 2,000 yards;
- MIDDLE-DISTANCE MEN who possess speed and enough stamina to last them over four miles; and
- LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS, who, relying more especially on stamina, can exceed that distance indefinitely.

At first sight, it might appear as though this suggested rearrangement were purely academical; but to my mind it is well worthy of serious consideration by all pedestrians.

There has been so much discussion lately about the alleged decline of British athletic prowess that it is surely worth considering whether there be any grounds, either for the fact or the allegation.

Personally, I am not disposed to think that we are deteriorating. We have perhaps passed through a few lean years, and have in consequence been compelled to yield possession (temporarily, as I believe) of some few of our long-cherished athletic wreaths. These trophies will, I am sure, all return to us sooner or later, but in order to make assurance doubly sure in this respect, I should be glad to see our athletes devoting more attention to specialisation.

Let each of our running men, for instance, make up his mind, after due and full experience, if necessary, which is his best distance, and then let him lay himself down to the training and perfecting of his powers therein. For it must be admitted that since human nature has not

been constructed to stand the strain of a sustained “burst” for 440 yards, it is unwise for a sprint runner to enter for a race of that distance.

All his training and most of his experience has habituated him to start off as fast as he can, and to keep going as hard as possible until he reach the tape, so that his instinct will inevitably urge him on to a similar attempt (or to something like it), despite the fact that by so doing he is bound to “crack up” more or less at some time or other during the fourth hundred.

One-mile and four-mile races are again, run under such totally different conditions as to practically preclude a runner from excelling at both, while a two-mile and a ten-mile race demand each of them such distinct methods of training and running as to render it absurd to class them together

I am, of course, aware that W. G. George was able to set up records for all sorts of distances from 1,320 yards to ten miles and over, but then it must generally be admitted that George was an exception.

There have been, and still will be, no doubt, other exceptions, to whom my remarks will not apply - one can never lay down rules for exceptions - but, nevertheless, I would never advise any pedestrian, amateur or professional, to aspire to the status of a phenomenon. He will in 99 cases out of 100 only strain himself by so doing, and wind up by developing himself into nothing at all.

Of late years, it is undoubtedly true that our amateur athletes have been compelled to acknowledge the superiority of American rivals at the shorter distance races, a state of affairs which has occasioned no small fluttering in the critical dovecotes, British critics bemoaning the degeneracy of our race, and their American confreres crowing very loudly over the superiority of their own.

Strange to say, the British Jeremiahs have neglected to comfort either themselves or their readers with the equally undeniable fact that our old superiority as long-distance runners is still practically unchanged, although one or two of the more candid Americans will occasionally, if somewhat grudgingly, admit that this is so, comforting themselves, however, with the reflection that long-distance events only form at most two or three items in any possible programme, and that, therefore, the *sum* of their victories at any international sports contest must necessarily bulk bigger than ours.

I have italicised the word *sum* because, from a racial point of view, I would sooner see the long-distance records still held in these islands, even if we had to say good-bye to all the others. Stamina tells in long-distance running, and as long as Britons can rest content that they can “stay longer” than any other people, well - I don’t think we need have any fear of the race degenerating.

Still, I am as greedy for my country’s honour as any-one could be, and to that end I would wish to see a stricter specialisation in vogue. I have ventured, therefore, to state in these pages such conclusions as I have formed during my experience, both as to ascertaining one’s

own powers and as to the training and development of them for all distances, whether on the track or across country.

I am not so conceited as to imagine that my views embody everything which can be said on the subjects under notice, but I nevertheless venture to think that they may not only prove of some slight interest, but may even prove on examination to be even of some small value.

It is usual, I believe, in books dealing with pedestrianism, to commence with sprinting, and to work gradually upwards therefrom, but in the present instance I have decided to deal first of all with those races in which we Britons still maintain pride of place, and to offer beginners the fruits of my experience on the subject with which I am best acquainted, in order that I may render such assistance as I am able towards the maintenance of the honours which we have held so long.

2 Preparation and Early Training for a Long-distance Runner

However a boy may fancy himself, I would strongly advise him to carefully avoid any long-distance work, at all events until past eighteen years of age.

If he is a born sprinter, well I suppose that no amount of advice or preaching will prevent him from showing off his indulges in before eighteen, the better for his future prospects. He should neither race nor train, except just so much as will keep him normally fit and healthy. Cricket, football, or practically any outdoor games, will do all that is needed towards preventing any superfluous deposits of flesh and rendering his joints and muscles supple and lissom.

When he has passed his eighteenth birthday and his frame and constitution are sufficiently "set," he may seriously begin to test his qualities as a long-distance, track or cross-country runner.

He should not think about entering for any races at first. It would, perhaps, be almost as well if he confined himself to training practice entirely during his first season, although there would be no harm in his competing in a race after he has had, say, thirteen or fourteen weeks' preparation, and supposing him to keep in good condition and not to have strained himself in any way, repeating the experiment once or twice during his first year.

The danger which he has chiefly to guard against will be any risk of "over-doing" it, either in strength or spirit. Early defeats may dishearten him, and too much continued effort at "getting home first," before he has come to his full powers, may work some constitutional damage which can never afterwards be repaired.

TRAINING FOR BEGINNERS

Now, a long-distance runner, or a beginner who aspires to become such, must bear in mind that the distance which he will be called upon most frequently to negotiate is ten miles, and so all, or the majority, of his initial preparation and training must be devoted towards developing his powers to staying that distance in good condition.

Should he discover, after a while, that he is not cut out for success over this trying course, well, the following system will not have hurt him in any way.

He will soon be enabled to find out if he is better qualified to shine as a mile, two-mile, three-mile, or four-mile runner, and can abandon his previous ambitions and set himself to win fame as a mile champion, or at one or other of the middle distances.

Let him commence with covering two or three miles three times every week, say, in the following order: 2, 3, 2 (but this is in no way arbitrary: it won't hurt him to run the longer distance if he feels fit and well for it).

For three weeks these runs should be kept up, and the distances should be covered three times each week, say, two miles twice and three miles once.

Then, for the next fortnight, he should go out for a run again thrice a week, but the distance now should be over either four, five, or six miles, the longest stretch to be covered certainly once during the fortnight.

He will now have got himself fairly accustomed to covering a long distance, and can (if he has got through without difficulty) now essay a really long-distance run. But I would warn any absolute novice against any attempt to cover any of the above-mentioned stretches at racing pace. These preliminary canters are to be regarded as "endurance," and not as "speed," tests.

Racing - serious racing - will come later, and before any idea is entertained of indulging therein the beginner must first ascertain his capacity to stay the course. The time in which he hopes to cover it in is a matter which he can think about later.

But suppose him to have ascertained that he can keep going for six miles without distressing himself, he should now test his quality at the full course. So during the next fortnight let him run ten miles twice, say on the Mondays, and eight miles, also twice, say on the Thursdays, both distances to be covered at a steady lope, since it is advisable to allow for at least two or three days' rest between the long spins.

The novice having now satisfied himself as to his staying powers, can begin to think about getting up speed. This he will find a more serious matter, and, as he is young at the game, he should not seek to overtax his powers. He has gained sufficient experience as to how much he has had in hand, and can now confidently lay himself out to cover two miles on four nights every week. Remember the distance is to be two miles only, but the pace is to be as fast as he can make it. It is not at all impossible that he will "crack up" at the first attempt, owing to having made the pace too hot, but before his fourth trial he will assuredly have been able to form a true estimate of his powers, and be able even to increase the pace at which he has found himself able to cover the course comfortably.

Once this is ascertained every effort should be made to get faster. The two-mile burst should be persevered with for four weeks altogether, during which time the course will have been covered sixteen times in all. It is a long burst, I know, but if a novice finds himself able to do it fairly well inside 9 min. 20 secs. he can rest assured that he is going along pretty well.

I am not giving him record time to run to in this distance, for that, of course, is a long way off; but no beginner need fear his ability to show up well in a ten-mile race if he has found that he can stay the course, even at a fastish trot only, and has subsequently managed to do two miles in 9 min. 20 secs.

By the way, wherever possible, put these practice runs in on a track, or, failing that, across grass. You will find a road too hard work altogether, and very conducive to shin-soreness, to say nothing of other troubles.

Another warning which I would like to give now, although it applies to every stage of a man's training, is "Don't get everlastingly looking at the clock!"

You will only worry and distress yourself if you do. You must, of course, take your time now and again, but let it stop at that. You will soon get into the habit of timing yourself. For you won't have been at the game long before you will be able to tell pretty accurately how you have been travelling. I can time myself now to pretty nearly a quarter of a second over almost any distance.

I am not sufficiently scientific to be able to tell you how it is done, but I suppose we all keep a sort of sub-conscious clock going, like the riverside men, who can always wake within fifteen minutes of high tide, although this changes every day.

THE SECOND STAGE

When the novice has got through the first stage as above and come to "feel" himself, he can lay himself out to develop his powers. I would still advise him not to yet attempt an actual race, but rather to fortify himself thoroughly against the strain of one.

To do this he should go back over the old system for another two, three, or four weeks, running either three or four times a week, add varying the distances about, say, a steady three miles, then a six-mile go, then a two-mile burst, followed two days after by a six- or eight-mile steady run. But don't follow any particular rule; just run as you feel, getting in several fast two miles to work your speed up, and an occasional really long run for the stamina department.

I have said two, three, or four weeks, but this will depend on circumstances. The great thing is to get thoroughly fit, and to feel that you are so.

Once that you are satisfied of this, drop the varying practice for a time, just putting in six or eight miles twice a week in order to keep in condition, and look about for a handicap which you think you can win. Enter your name, and go in for serious training.

3 Special Preparation for a Long-distance race

As already mentioned, I do not include the four miles as being a really long-distance event, and as very few races are run (in England, at all events) at any distance between four and ten miles, I propose here to deal chiefly with the best method of training for the latter distance.

Not that there should be any great alteration in the following routine for either a five-, six-, seven-, or eight-mile training, but merely a proportionate reduction in the practice spins, which reduction I will deal with later.

Supposing, therefore, that the athlete has brought himself into a fit condition by observing the rules laid down in the last chapter (and he can entertain little hope of success unless he has gone through such initial preparation), he should now order his life on a set system for the weeks that intervene between the acceptance of his entry and the race itself.

Various systems have been recommended from time to time by famous athletes, whose successful careers alone would entitle their views to the utmost respect. Naturally, I have no wish to set myself up as a mentor, whose opinions should override everyone else's; but although my experience may not have been so lengthy as those of others, I have reason to believe it to be quite as extensive, seeing that I have run more long-distance races in two years than many men have in five; and since the measure of success which has fallen to me has been not altogether a small one, I venture to think that the system which has served me so well may be not without its value for others. I may add that I am fortified in this opinion by the fact that my own ideas on the subject appear to coincide entirely with those of Mr. Harry Andrews; the only trainer I have ever had, and one who, in my opinion, seeks his equal in that capacity.

Be that as it may, I have never trained but in the one fashion, and that is to rise at about 7.30 a.m., and, after going through about ten minutes' free exercise, to dress quickly and get out of doors for a brisk two-mile walk before breakfast, going at about four and a half miles an hour. All walks should be done at this pace.

I have generally made a point of getting up at half-past seven, as I have usually gone to bed about 10.30 p.m., and believe in having at least nine hours' sleep. I would put the minimum period of rest necessary as being from eight and a half to nine hours, and would advise all athletes to govern their waking and sleeping hours by this rule. The morning walk should be a sharp one, so as to loosen the muscles, expand the lungs, and give one a good edge to one's appetite.

The preliminary exercise should be as free as possible. An exerciser or chest expander might be employed if desired, though I would suggest that preference be given to Indian clubs, light dumb-bells, or absolutely free movements, than to anything in the nature of heavy work. Not that either developers or chest expanders lead necessarily to heavy work, but there is always a natural tendency to make them so, and for this very reason free movements or Indian clubs are preferable to dumb-bells, which frequently tempt their users into an increase of weight, from a desire to encourage a big muscular development, which is

the very thing to avoid. A pedestrian does not want heavy, bunchy, muscles; these will only impede the freedom of his movements, and will also give him a lot of unnecessary weight to carry. Muscle weighs more than flesh, and is not nearly so easy to "get off." So if you use dumb-bells be sure that they are of the lightest kind - certainly not exceeding 2 lbs. each, if as much; just enough, in fact, to lend a little extra owing.

The walk finished, you will be more than ready for breakfast. This should, nevertheless, be a fairly light meal. Two or three medium-boiled eggs, a little fish, perhaps, some dry toast, and, say, two cups of coffee in preference to tea. It is as well to take some oatmeal porridge now and then in order to supply the necessary building material for one's bones, which is to be found in oatmeal in greater quantity than in any other food with which I am acquainted.

After sufficient time has been allowed for the due digestion of one's breakfast, get out on the track and put in a four- or five-miles' spin, which distance should be increased to eight miles once or twice a week.

Then back to lunch or mid-day dinner - whichever you prefer - at about 1 p.m. This should be fairly substantial. A steak, or plain roast or boiled beef or mutton, fruit, milk puddings, and a sufficiency of green vegetables. No potatoes. Stale bread, or, preferably, dry toast, one glass of old ale will be found about the best thing to drink, or, if an absolute teetotaler, a cup of Bovril or coffee. The Bovril should, I think, be preferred to the coffee, and whatever is taken should be taken with the food, not before or after.

Then about 3 p.m. go back to the track and put in your afternoon work, which should consist of three-mile runs for the first week, eight or ten miles during the second, and two-mile fast bursts for the third. Follow up the system as prescribed for preliminary training, varying it from two-mile runs at top speed to four-, five-, six-, eight-, and ten-mile steady runs.

It is, perhaps, difficult to lay down a hard and fast, rule, as the course of training will naturally vary with the time at one's disposal; but the best method to adopt will perhaps be to divide whatever time you may have into about ten periods, and to devote the first three to three-mile runs, the next two to four-, five-, and six-mile distances, the next two to eight and ten miles, and the last three to two-mile bursts, interspersing throughout an occasional trial of your speed over the full course, as though you were actually running the race. As some idea of the times which should be run to as near as possible, I would recommend the following, which is a little above record, for if a man can get fairly close to this standard he can be fairly well satisfied that with slightly more experience of the excitement of an actual race itself that it won't be long before he is able to put up new records himself.

He should not lay himself out to cover the earlier distances in greatly reduced periods, as by so doing he is certain to crack up long before the tenth mile comes along. The great thing is to run well "within yourself" all the way - to feel always that you have something in hand, for you can never tell when you may need that something.

Whatever you do, don't make the mistake of trying to do the full ten miles too often. Vary your training spins as much as possible within the lines sketched above, and, when going for

the short two-mile runs, go as fast as you can all the way, so as to develop your speed as much as possible.

Supposing that you have received a fairly decent handicap, in yards if not in time, you may confine your full distance runs to the course which you will actually have to cover in the race itself. But I would certainly advise you, in any event, to go over the full ten miles at least once.

At the close of the afternoon work stroll back home, and about 5.30 to six have your last meal of the day. This, which should be a sort of high tea, should consist of much the same items as your breakfast; that is to say, of eggs (medium-boiled), a little fish or cold roast meat, dry toast, and tea. Fruit or rhubarb may also be taken, but all pastry, stews, and made dishes should be carefully avoided.

After tea go for a two-mile walk, and before going to bed drink a cup of Bovril, or something of the kind. It is most important to observe regular hours throughout. Meals should be taken at the same times every day, and the times for going to bed and rising should also be strictly the same.

Rest on Sundays altogether. You will certainly feel strongly inclined for the lazy-off, and will certainly not suffer thereby.

TRAINING FOR THE MAN IN BUSINESS

The above course of training, it may be objected, is no doubt admirable for the man with plenty of leisure, but not for one who has to attend an office or other place of business. Well, obviously, the latter can't possibly adhere strictly to it; but, nevertheless, it should not be impossible for him to approximate thereto as nearly as he can.

For instance, he can take his early morning walk, and after breakfast can walk sharply to business (or, at all events, for some fair part of the way). He can even cover some of the ground, if he lives tiny distance out, at a decent trot, and can follow the same rule on his way home.

His meals should also be regular, and he must adapt himself to circumstances in substituting evening work for the morning and afternoon work of his better situated rival.

Let him get down to the track about 6 p.m., or as near thereto as he can manage, and put in a good run every night. As he has to make one spin serve instead of two, he would be well advised to lengthen his shorter runs by 50 per cent or thereabouts - that is, run three miles instead of two, six miles instead of four. The eight and ten miles, of course, need not be lengthened, nor should the distance of the full speed two-mile bursts be interfered with.

Another means by which the business man can make up his handicap as against his leisured rival is by putting in a longer period of strict training. The latter, supposing him to be absolutely fit when commencing, should be able to "make do" with three weeks' hard work,

while the former would be better suited with four or five weeks, which will enable him to take matters somewhat easier, and thereby run a lesser risk of growing stale.

This calamity, which is the constant dread of every brand of athlete during his training, is perhaps more readily detected by the running man than by the boxer or wrestler. His work is drawn out longer, and he is presented with more opportunities of recognising any lack of interest or want of fire.

He may also watch for the most certain tell-tale of all, that one sure sign which is vouchsafed to everyone in training, viz., the absence of free perspiration after hard work.

But no matter what warning he may receive, he must take immediate steps to combat the enemy. He must knock off all work for a while, and go very quietly indeed until he finds that he is fit again. A week's rest, with only one spin, would about do the trick even in a bad case, but there are occasions when as long as a fortnight may be necessary.

Don't hesitate about this. Better go into the race half trained than over trained. For in the former case you will have fire and vigour at least, and without these two qualities success is not to be looked for.

Scratch even, if you feel like it, but only do this in extreme cases, as the race would serve, as a good practice spin anyway.

HINTS ON TRIAL RUNS

This brings me back to a point which I have hitherto passed over, and that is that when running on the track in training try and run in company as often as possible.

With companions running beside you you won't feel anything like so lonely as you will by yourself. Besides which the distance will be shortened, if not in fact, then at all events in seeming. For when running alone, particularly as a beginner, the miles seem to be positively interminable, and each additional one at least 400 yards longer than the last.

For your actual "trial" runs - those in which you are trying to discover what you are really capable of - exert your utmost endeavours to enlist the services of a few pacemakers - either runners or cyclists. These will serve a double purpose, since they will bring you along, and moreover, if well selected and experienced hands, will enable you to dispense with the clock.

They should be able to cover the distances for which they are doing duty to the scheduled time set forth above, and will thus help you far more than would a friend with a stop-watch calling out your times at each quarter-mile.

In the latter instance, you may have unwittingly got behind or in front of the clock, and so will be worried as to whether you should sprint up or take it easy for the next quarter so as to rectify matters. You will, besides, be running regularly all the time, keeping to your man, and so will be doing far better work.

Even with the advantage of many years' experience, when you are able to run instinctively to the clock, and can tell yourself almost to the fifth of a second in how much time you are going to cover a quarter, it is always advisable to get a pacemaker. You can get him in those circumstances to run a shade faster than the schedule, and so get yourself quickened up. A man just in front of you is about the best incentive you can have to induce you to put your best foot foremost.

Keep your training up right close up to the day before your race. If you are in business try and get a half day off just before, so that you can have all the necessary rest. I would advise no one to ease up till then. Take the day off just before, and only put in, say, two two-mile walks, and these not too fast.

TRAINING FOR THE SHORTER LONG DISTANCES

By these I mean for a five-, six-, or eight-mile race, or for any intermediate distance. In these cases a very similar routine should be observed to that for a ten-mile affair, the only variation being that the distances of the practice spins should be cut down proportionately; but since the strain of the shorter course is not so great I would not recommend the percentage actually reduced being in an exact proportion.

For instance, for a five-mile race the three-mile spins might come down to two and a quarter miles, the four miles to three miles, and the limit of five miles, of course, adhered to, save on one or two occasions, when six miles can be profitably covered. The fast-run two miles should, however, be kept to that distance. This is speed practice, and you want decently long speed training.

Six-, eight-, and other mile races should be trained for on the same rule. Common sense and a little consideration will tell you what distances to cover in your training without any necessity for me to cover the whole ground over again.

Training, however, should be fairly strict. Not less than three good spins a week.

4 The Best Way to Run a Long-distance Race

In this case you will, of course, be governed by your handicap to a very large extent, and presuming that the younger and more inexperienced runner will be more inclined to seek instruction in these pages than the practised men, who will possibly have to start from "scratch," I propose commencing with "limit men," or with men who are getting on that way.

A great deal depends on whether the start is given in distance or in time, the first of which is naturally more acceptable to the recipient, seeing that he is not compelled to actually run the full course.

In the first case I would give him the same advice as I would to a scratch man for his start. The same rule naturally applies to both at the first go off.

STARTING

Don't imagine that you want to crouch down as a sprinter does. The dash forward and snapping up of a yard or so is very little advantage in a long race, and the effort to snatch it will take more out of you than the advantage is worth.

Stand at your mark in an easy, loose attitude leaning slightly forward, as shown in the illustration, with ears well stretched to catch the first sound of the pistol, and every muscle ready to get away as soon as that goes off.

Get away smartly, with a stride of, say, 4 ft. 10 in. in length, letting this go as easily as you can. Don't make the mistake of striding too long or of lifting your legs too high. For either of these will only weary you, just as will any excessive gesticulation with your arms. Remember that you are not striving to cover the ground as fast as possible, but are aiming to keep up a ten-mile run at as near a mile every five minutes as you can - the earlier miles in a few seconds loss; but this is only on account of the naturally redressed balance later on.

Stride right off about 4 ft. 10 in. or 6 ft., and under normal circumstances keep this up right through till the last quarter or half mile, when, supposing the other men to be on the scene or thereabouts (as they will certainly be), you can lay yourself out for a right-down sprint, striding as far as you can stretch, and springing all you know how every time.

Supposing, however, that your start is in time. Then you can set out to cover as much ground as you conveniently can in the seconds allowed. Conveniently can mean as much ground as you can get over without running any risk of pumping yourself later on. You must be careful of this, but bear in mind that the farther you have got away from the field or the scratch men the more ground they will have to cover before they can catch you up.

The longer this is, the more depressed they will get naturally. A stern chase is proverbially a long one, and a back-marker is liable to reckon his distance and pace quite as much by the men he passes as he will by the laps covered. So set your mind on getting in front as far as you can and staying in that position for as long as you can manage to do so.

WHEN LEADING

If you have got in front you will, as already advised, use your utmost endeavours to keep there. It's the best place to be in, you know. But don't struggle and burst yourself every yard. There is no sense in making a quarter-mile race of a section of the course between yourself and your immediate attendants, so as to crack you all up and leave the field open for the others to jog comfortably in.

Say you have run two or three miles, have put in a fast quarter-mile, and still find that you haven't increased your lead any, sprint hard for 100 yards and then rest for the next half mile, allowing your pursuers to gradually make up their leeway while you are taking it soft and easy. Wait for them to almost catch you up, and then burst out in a fast sprint for 100 yards or so. You will have saved your energy for this effort, and it is more than improbable that their effort to catch up your last sprint lead will have so taken it out of them that they won't be able to respond.

You can then indulge in another breather for half a mile or so, and repeat the operation. A few repetitions are apt to get disheartening to the man or men behind, but you have, of course, to be in first-rate condition to do this.

If you have a good lead - fifty or sixty yards or so - don't get excited when the other men begin to cut this down. Keep steady, or, if pumped, even slack off a trifle, so as to make them think that they are going faster than they really are. They will even be tempted to spurt so as to pass you soon, and you can allow them to almost come up to you. Then sprint for all you are worth. Jump right away. The man or men who have been coming up will be in rather a quandary. They will have probably taken something out of themselves in their efforts to catch you, and if now called upon to follow you in a fast sprint will not be too confident about the men behind them. For if they let you go on you may put a winning distance between you, and if they accept your challenge they may have to sprint not only fast but far, with the result that they will be baking themselves into a nice pie for the scratch men to come along and cut.

Of course, in every instance it will, to a certain extent, be a match between your brains (plus condition) and the other fellows'. You may not have a 100 yards sprint in you at the exact moment you want it, and you may perhaps be able to sprint even 200 or 300 yards without distressing yourself overmuch. Whichever way you are situated you must try and convince the other men to the contrary.

DISGUISE YOUR POWERS

You can deceive them as to your actual condition by setting off on your periodical or occasional sprints in a seemingly frantic or in a confident, triumphant fashion. They may, in the first case, accept your challenge, and you can then take it out of them; or in the other instance they may allow you to go on and crack yourself up, or possibly put up such a lead as will enable you to take a long "easy" and recover.

Either will depend on the skill with which you have adapted both your strategy and tactics to the situation.

Never really give in as long as you have any earthly chance, and above all don't allow yourself to fancy that you are in this predicament until the gruesome knowledge is absolutely forced upon you. For however bad you may be feeling, it is by no means impossible that the other fellows may be feeling quite as much, if not even more, distressed.

Even supposing that you have been caught and passed without your having had the necessary reserve to "sprint" and maintain your lead, but can still keep running, it would be advisable to slack off a bit, take an easy for a mile or a mile and a half, and then spurt. The others may then come back to you in quite surprising fashion. In any event you have not made your position any the worse, and have done your best towards improving it.

IF RUNNING FROM SCRATCH OR WELL DOWN THE COURSE

In this position, or in any similar one, your first aim will naturally be to improve it. There are a lot of men in front of you with whose form you are more or less acquainted, and of whom you must get in front if you entertain any idea of being the first to break the tape.

These leaders may or may not be above themselves. This you can have no idea or guess about any more than you can have of any dark horses who may have entered. All that you can go by is the probability of their powers having been known by the handicapper when he arranged the starts, and you can only hope that he has not erred on the side of generosity to your rivals, and handicapped you clean out of the race.

Well, you know your own form, or ought to. So as there is a biggish field strung out ahead you must set about your work of cutting them down in double quick style.

Quicken, but don't lengthen, your stride, and do your first mile in a few seconds better than your average best. If this hasn't accounted for enough of them, get along for the second mile at the same "bat."

They will possibly sprint and wait, and generally carry on as they were advised above, but you mustn't let that worry you. Of course, if you are fairly well up to a man, and can gallop past him, well, do so and go ahead; but if he tries the sprinting game wilily, don't have any.

This is a long-drawn-out agony remember, and you have to be on hand at the finish, and have a whole field of tacticians to cut down.

So just keep pegging away, at a faster pace than usual, until you have given most of them the "go by." Say you do the first mile in 4 min. 32 secs., and the first two in 9 min. 38 secs., and can hang on and put three behind you in 14 min. 20 secs. or thereabouts, you must be aware that you are running close on record time, and a good deal better than anyone has who laid himself out to cut the ten-mile record.

You will have to pay for this later on, of course, and will reel your last mile off pretty slowly in consequence; but you can ease your mind by reflecting that if the other fellows are keeping their leads that they are also baking themselves proportionately, and records are not the things which are worrying you just now. All that you are troubled about is those fellows in front, and you don't want to have to overhaul the whole crowd of them in the last quarter-mile.

Some of them may be still ahead then, but keep along cutting your best times until you have reduced their number to as few as you conveniently can, and then lay yourself to a gradual edging up to within such distance as you can conveniently cover in your final gallop.

For this is, or should be, one of your strongest points. I forgot to mention it in my training chapter, but in all those practice spins of yours you ought to so manage them that you finish up the last 100 yards - and sometimes 200 or 300 yards even - at a tremendous pace. If you make a regular habit of doing this you will find that you automatically save up the energy for this. It is a sort of extra special reserve, which you never draw on save for the actual purpose in question, and no other demand can trench on it.

It is a reserve which is under the entire and sole control of your "sub-conscious self," as the scientists call it, and can only be let out when wanted for the finish.

This may sound rather "tall talk," but I am sure that everybody can get into the way of so conserving it, supposing them to train right and to fix their minds on getting the necessary amount of energy properly stowed away under lock and key until called for.

One method which may be adopted in training will help towards its acquisition, and that is to always finish up your track practice with one or two sharp sprints of 100 yards each.

No matter how your trial spin may have taken it out of you, you should have enough in hand just to put in these sprints. They will, perhaps, be awfully trying at first, but after a while you will find that they positively freshen you up and shake off a good deal of the fatigue following the training spin itself.

FINALLY

Always travel to the scene of the race, if far distant, the day before, so as to ensure a good night's rest following the train journey, before actually engaging in the race itself

5 On Sprint Running and Training

It may, perhaps, seem strange on my part to lay down any training or running laws for sprinters, seeing that I have never been a sprint runner pure and simple. But then, of course, even long-distance runners, as has been already hinted, have to study up the subject of sprinting on their own account. They have frequently to introduce more sprints into their long-distance runs than they particularly care about perhaps, even if they do not aspire to covering their intermittent 100-yard bursts inside even time on every occasion.

Still, a long-distance runner naturally has to cast around in search of any wrinkles which he can discover that will help him to get over the ground at top speed, and to that end he will, if he is wise, study sprinters and their ways.

Personally, I have been pretty well favoured in this respect, as I have been privileged to tour Australia with the greatest of all sprint runners - A. F. Duffey - and have, whenever I had an opportunity, closely watched both his system and style.

Unfortunately, my build and natural action has prevented my being able to exactly imitate the latter when I have been called upon to "travel," although, perhaps, this seeming misfortune has, after all, been a blessing in disguise.

I don't know that I am abnormally deficient in natural vanity, but I am certainly unable to persuade myself that I am gifted with such extraordinary versatility as to be able to rapidly and completely change my natural action whenever I want to.

I have been described as having a somewhat low and gliding action, with the body leaning forward and the arms kept low. This I have found to be the one best suited to the stride I like to preserve, and I am inclined to fear that if I endeavoured to cultivate to perfection the tremendous stride and springing action of the ideal sprinter whenever I had need to get ahead of a man, or to join in a punishing finish, that I should thereby tend to tangle myself up.

A runner's stride, whatever it is, is more or less of a mechanical action. He may discover that he is all wrong, is striding too short, too long, or too high, and may, on that account, set himself to work to eradicate these defects.

He can only do this by continual hard practice, as it is more difficult at running, as at everything else, to break oneself of a fault than it is to acquire a virtue. But once the change is successfully made the new action will have become mechanical, and must remain so.

So that while I am thus debarred from giving advice on "sprinting" from any actual experience of my own, I can still do so from observation, and I suppose that you are all more or less acquainted with the proverb which says that "lookers-on see most of the game"; and as "sprinting" is a game that I don't play properly, and never propose to attempt in its higher forms, I have found it to possess a special interest for me. So great an interest, indeed, that I fear that I have paid more attention to the action and system of famous sprint runners than I have to those of my rivals in my own line of business.

STARTING FOR A SPRINT

Unlike long-distance running, the start is all important to a sprinter. If he loses any advantage there he will have to work more than double tides later on to make it up. Besides which, as I have said, weight counts for a good deal in these very short-distance races, and in order to get a. pull out of your poundage instead of being pulled back by it, you must launch your body as far and as fast forward as you can at your first spring off.

If there were no other reason for advocating the “all fours” attitude of starting for a sprint this point should alone carry the day in its favour. But there are many others, first and foremost of which is the steady position it enables a runner to assume when on the mark - a very important consideration, indeed, if one does not want to have to pay the penalty of getting prematurely over the line.

Duffey, when settling down for a sprint race, would scrape a hole two or three inches deep in the cinders for his right foot so as to make a bank to push off from directly the pistol was fired. He would then rest on his hands and knee waiting for the “get ready” warning. At this he would arch his body a trifle, resting his weight chiefly on his left toes and hands, with the right leg free and bent, waiting with every muscle screwed up for the push. As soon as the pistol went he had gone, shooting forward as if from a gun, with a sort of seven-leagued stride, which seemed to get faster and longer until the tape was reached.

I am sorry now that I never measured Duffey’s stride, for at times it must have been phenomenal. That is the whole secret of running any distance up to 100 yards. Get off with a burst, and burst more every step. You have no pace or other considerations to bother you, but have simply to try for record every time. Simple, isn’t it? The only other points to remember are the need for keeping the body steady and straight, the inadvisability of swinging your arms high, and the folly of throwing your head back in order to study the stars. They aren’t visible as a rule at that time of day, and if you look up at the sky you won’t be able to see where you are going, and may blunder into someone else.

TRAINING FOR THE 100 YARDS

As this distance (which may include the 60 and the 73 yards as well, for the purpose of this argument) cannot be described as a wearing race, there is not, perhaps, so much necessity to adhere to any very strict training routine. The sprinter has no need to cultivate wind and staying power to the same extent as a long-distance runner.

But it would, nevertheless, be more than foolish of him on that account to racket about. Granted that sprinters are born rather than made, certain common-sense rules must be observed.

As to diet, the sprinter should eat regularly and plainly. Any variety of food and drink that he finds to agree with his digestion will do very well, but he would be well advised to avoid new bread, pastries, puddings, etc. (whether fruit or meat), strong tea, spirits, excessive smoking, etc. Unless he keeps his body and health in good, sound condition, he will be

unable to produce his best efforts, to get out of himself all that he is capable of, etc. But beyond exercising prudence in this direction, there is no great necessity for him to trouble himself overmuch as to what he eats and drinks.

As to the best system of practising for a sprint - well, opinions differ a bit, and as I do not feel that either I myself (or anyone else, for that matter) is entitled to lay down any hard-and-fast rule concerning such an open question, I propose to lay the various systems before you and leave you to pick the one that suits you best.

Duffey, for instance, would turn out every afternoon and run two separate 100 yards at full pelt, with a ten minutes' interval in between. He adhered to much the same kind of diet as I did myself, and which I have already described, and, beyond the above practice, confined himself to a short walk every morning.

He would put in a bit of "starting" practice (of which more later on), but would not overdo this.

Not a very arduous training, perhaps, but then it must be remembered that this was in Australia and New Zealand, with the temperature up to 122 degrees in the shade, so that neither of us felt too sweet on training.

Still, I don't think that Duffey suffered any too much by not putting in any more practice, for I doubt if he needed more at any time. Several of the sporting critics have stated that the famous American did not cover himself with glory "down under," but I think that this is a mis-statement.

He wasn't altogether suited by the climate, perhaps, but he nevertheless covered the 100 yards, five or six times, in 9 4-6 secs. during the tour, and times like that are good enough for anything.

Some sprinters even confine themselves to doing the 100 yards every day, while others again will not only do this, but will include several starting trials.

They will get down, get the signal given them, and burst off for a 40- or 50-yards sprint, and then gradually pull up in another 20 or 30 yards or so, and stroll back. They will repeat this perhaps a dozen times, and perhaps this isn't bad practice if one is inclined to be slow out of the slips.

But in starting practice care must be taken not to strain the thigh muscles, as these are naturally exposed to considerable wear in the "push off" and early spring forward. A sprain here is about the worst accident which can befall a runner, and should be attended to immediately. The moment you feel that such a catastrophe has occurred, knock off all work at once. Exercise as little as possible, massage, rub with embrocation, and hold the affected part under running cold water for as long as you can stand it. It's the only remedy there is, and it is one which you dare not afford to neglect.

By the bye, owing to the sprinter's liability to this accident, it is important that his thigh and leg muscles generally should be as strong as possible. He would do well to include in his training as many free movements and as much skipping exercise as he can get in. These muscles must be well developed - they cannot be made too strong; but, on the other hand, they must not be made too stiff or too hard. The movements chosen, therefore, should be absolutely "free" ones, and the muscles should be well massaged after every exercise.

From my own observation, I would recommend a 100-yard sprinter not to confine himself to 100-yard sprints. He should, I think, put in several 50-yard or 75-yard bursts daily, and twice or three times a day only go for the full distance. As in other training, there is no need for him to keep clocking himself, but he should endeavour always to cover the full course in or about 10 1-6 secs. This will wind him up well, and will leave him enough superfluous energy and speed in the actual race itself to get inside even time. The 50-and 75-yard bursts will develop his speed sufficiently, for if he can get these down fairly close to record, i.e., 5 1/4 and 7 secs. (world's professional), he will have got enough steam up in the actual race to carry him over the remaining distance quick enough for any and all requirements.

TRAINING AND RUNNING LONG-DISTANCE SPRINTS

These sprints, which are generally supposed to cover all distances from 120 up to 350 yards, need a fairly considerable amount of attention, and should be trained for and run strictly according to their actual distance.

The 120 yards, however, needs very little discussion, being practically the same as the 100 yards race. I am inclined to imagine that any 100 yards man has only to lay himself down to his own distance to feel confident of covering the extra twenty with scarcely any extra effort, and, in all probability in better relative time. His steam will suffice to carry him along.

As the distance increases, however, up to 150 yards and longer, the runner must study himself more, and make allowances accordingly. He may, for instance, be able to sprint and stay the whole distance naturally, in which case he can just rest content with the same training as for 100 yards, with due regard to the relatively longer course. But if he is so constituted as to have to make a special effort, he should put in most of his time at sustained bursts of from two-thirds to three-fourths of the full course. In no case must these trial spins be allowed to ease up at the end, nor must the steam worked up to be taken into consideration. That last factor will be needed in the race itself to carry the sprinter over the final third or fourth of the distance up to the tape, and in any event cannot be relied exclusively upon for more than 25 or 30 yards.

In fact, in many instances - and these will increase in number from 160 yards upwards - the factor which I have described as "steam" becomes more and more negligible. Few runners are able to travel 200 yards at top speed throughout, and fewer still over that distance, while when 260 yards is exceeded the number becomes small indeed.

All therefore that the long-distance sprinter can do is to cultivate sufficient stamina to enable him to maintain his initial burst right along, endeavouring the while to preserve sufficient energy for a final effort if such he needed. He consequently requires to practice

assiduously, to train constantly (with a wary eye on the possible approach of “that tired feeling” known as getting stale), and to adhere to a strict formula of diet.

Follow out the training rules as laid down for long-distance runners, with the exception, of course, of the length of the trial spins and the walks. The latter should be brisker, and interspersed with an occasional sprint, while the spins themselves will vary according to the course trained for and the runner’s peculiarities. Don’t smoke, or else be very moderate in the use of tobacco; don’t drink spirits, and only sparingly of old ale.

Neither must the long-distance sprinter neglect practising the negotiating of a bend (both left and right hand) at top speed. Very few courses have a longer straight run than 120 yards, and this factor must also be taken into consideration. A warning which may be here given to sprint runners generally is that they should never attempt passing a man while rounding a curve. He will, or should, be hugging the edge of the track, and may therefore swerve out as he goes round, so that if you try to pass him at that particular moment you will naturally be forced out, and may not only thereby lose ground, but also miss your stride.

The 300 yards has been run in even time, and all the lesser sprints within that, so that the sprinter pure and simple need not despair of covering the whole distance in one burst. No man yet, however, has ever succeeded in doing evens over 300 yards, so it is to be assumed that that course is really the sprint limit.

6 The Quarter Mile

This is a peculiar kind of a race, if a very popular one. I have accorded it the distinction of standing in a class by itself, because, seeing that it is neither a sprint nor a short-distance race, it is generally competed for by men from each division. I am inclined to doubt whether there ever have been any quarter-milers pure and simple, and, taking into consideration the records already put up for the distance, it may be doubted whether, were such a class to come into existence, there would be any corresponding improvement in the form displayed.

Well, I am not so sure of this. I fancy that 47 4-6 secs. is susceptible of improvement. It is very good, I know, and about right in comparison with 36 1-6 secs. - Downer's professional record for the 360 yards. Nevertheless, I would like to see someone have a good cut at it. The quarter is popular enough and contested quite often enough to make it worth a suitable man's while seeing what he can do by confining himself to that distance.

The race is often run in heats, and the half mile or mile runner may therefore be supposed to hold an advantage thereby. But if a man conscientiously practices the quarter he should not be distressed at having to run it several times in the afternoon. He will anyway be far better placed than the sprinters who enter for the race. They are running out of their distance, and are almost certain consequently to crack in the final.

When training for this I would suggest a man confining all his spins to the quarter-mile distance only, for the chief point which he has to discover is the method in which he can cover the distance quickest. He won't be able to sprint all the way (at least, I doubt it), but I fancy that he will find that he can get well off and stride fast, low, and long for 300 yards, saving enough for a final gallop home.

Some men run their first 100 at about 76 per cent of their fastest pace, and then quicken up gradually to 250 yards or thereabouts, when they sprint home. I don't think much of this method, as it savours too much pace-judging, and the less a quarter-mile man bothers about that the better. The quarter resembles a sprint sufficiently to my mind in that a man wants to get over the ground as quickly as possible, and he should therefore essay principally the art of "smashing" along all the way, with a special "sub-conscious" reserve for the final 100 or 160 yards.

He must, of course, train very strictly. His diet should be as plain and simple as it can be, the rules advocated in Chapter 1 being closely adhered to, especially those about regular meal times and plentiful and regular sleep. Plenty of free movements and regular massage after exercise, besides the close observance of every regulation which will keep him in good condition all the year round.

I don't mean that a man should train hard continually, for by so doing he will go frightfully stale, but that he should never allow himself to get out of hand.

He must be a magnificent athlete if he is going to turn the quarter mile into a long-distance sprint, which will be the only certain method of lowering the existing records.

7 Short “Distance” Races, including the Mile

These, which I have lumped together in one Section, are generally regarded as middle distances and the mile, but I think I have already given my reasons for looking at them as being best described by the title accorded to this chapter. There are naturally certain distinctions and variations to be observed, both in training for and in running these various races; but the same principle may be said to govern each and every one of them, and I have therefore classed them together, merely giving such training and running hints as seem to me to be the best adapted to each under the several headings.

THE SIX HUNDRED

This race has practically dropped out of most athletic programmes, although there have been some very good times made at it, the amateurs over this distance having done better than the professionals. Bredin's time in 1893 of 1 min. 11 2-6 secs. was not a bad record, although Burke knocked the fraction off in New York three years later.

The distance, looked at anyhow, like the 500 and the 660 yards, is more or less of an agonised quarter mile, and as there are so few opportunities of competing for it, it might be urged that it is scarcely worth making any special preparation for.

Still, the half-mile runner who cares to look at a 600-yard trial spin as being an actual 600 yards race won't find it a bad item in his preparation for the half mile itself. That is about the most sensible and profitable way of looking at it. Otherwise, I would suggest regular steady spins of about 800 to 1,000 yards three times a week, followed by 76- to 120-yard sprints.

Then take a brisk walk round the track so as to keep warm and loose muscled, and put in a 200 to 250 yards fast gallop, trot back to the dressing-room, and so home.

The other three days may be occupied alternately with brisk two or three-mile walks and some starting practice, with 600-yard fast spins and an occasional 150-yard sprint at top speed. But don't overdo the training, as you are not likely to have many opportunities of demonstrating its value in public, and should look upon the whole course as being more or less part of your preparation for the half mile.

880 YARDS

Having run through a more or less strict initial preparation such as I have outlined above for the 600 yards, you can devote your last three weeks to winding yourself up for this most trying of all races. Not, perhaps, so trying in itself as the 1,320 yards affair (which is dropping out of use, by the way), but more so on account of its being not infrequently run off in heats, and as even under ordinary circumstances the half mile is anything but a soft job, it becomes really a serious matter when one has to run it over more than once.

If, however, you are so unfortunate as to be entered for a contest which is going to be a long-drawn agony, your first care must be to ascertain the exact qualifications which you will need for the final, and devote your energies rather to getting into one of the necessary

places than to the actual winning of your heat itself. You will have quite enough to do as it is without seeking to add to your burden. To secure this get off the mark well, and set up a rate but until you find yourself well placed, and then take an easy for a while. By this I don't mean shorten your stride or drop into a trot, but slacken down your energies consistently with the maintenance of a fair position for well over the quarter, gathering up your forces quickly for a straight 300 yards run in.

When the final comes along, or, supposing the race to be run right off, your beat plan would perhaps be to get off fast. Go along at a steady, fastish stride up to 550 or 600 yards, and then make a sprint of it home, with a flying finish if necessary. Many experts advise several variations in pace, according to circumstances; but I am inclined to deprecate this, as so many pedestrians, especially at the shorter distances, are inclined to go all to pieces if they once slacken speed.

This is a danger which threatens more forcibly perhaps in the mile and two miles, and must be prepared for in training.

The best way to do this is to make your last three weeks a round rather of over-distance courses at varying speeds, say, 1,000 yards, 1,600 yards, and even the full mile. Don't neglect the 880 yards itself, however, and be careful of your sprinting powers, as it is more than probable that you will need these pretty badly.

THE 1,320 YARDS

The three-quarters is being rapidly relegated purely to the list of records. Unfortunately so, as I think, for it is a rattling good race, calculated to find out any man's weak spots. Still, it is worth training for, being a good preparation for the mile itself - a better one perhaps even than the 800 yards is for the half mile, the reason being that the third quarter is the worst of a mile race, and the point where most of the field are liable to crack up.

I suppose that there is a fixed limit to the normal man's first wind in a fast-run distance race, and that is about the 900 yards, so that for the next 400 he is generally fighting for his second wind as it is called, and when the course in front of him looks every inch of another 860 yards he begins to despair of ever receiving the reinforcement he is craving for. Over a long course of several miles the pace is naturally nothing like so great a cracker, and therefore a well-trained man hasn't long to wait between the first and second winds, for I do not seem to recall any such trying period in my long runs as the third quarter of a mile seems to be to many milers.

In a 1,320 yards race, moreover, the bad time is the straight for home, so to speak, and few men are able to call up the necessary sprint while they are fighting for staying power as well. So they struggle and collapse - mute evidences of the punishing nature of the contest.

When training for the three-quarter mile I would advise going up to as much as one and a half miles for steady work, followed, after a trotting rest, by a quarter-mile fast burst. Next do the distance itself at a good stride, and then, perhaps, a 1,000 or 1,200 yards at a shade below beat, with a 150 yards final burst. On the third day run a mile well within yourself,

and sprint the last 220 yards. For the remaining three days vary between fast half miles, steady one and a quarter miles, and good striding miles. Always sprint the last 100 yards or so home, and, if capable of so doing without staleness, add one or two other longer sprints here and there. Train every day bar Sundays, and don't fail (if you can possibly avoid it) to go for several long, brisk walks every week. It is hard work I know, but when you remember that the race itself will have to be run probably as a steady fast-run half mile, with a punishing quarter to finish, you will understand that the hard work is absolutely demanded. Even if you don't run a race at all you won't miss such a training, as, spread out with intervening days of rest, it won't make a bad initial training for the mile itself.

THE MILE

A special distinction clings to this race, in that the record made by W. G. George twenty-two years ago still stands, and, as it is now about 3 secs. better than the next best effort, it seems likely to stand perhaps for another similar period.

Curiously, however, George himself thinks that it could be, and ought to be, beaten. He even suggests that the time could be lowered a full second, if not more.

That is as may be, but I am inclined to agree with him that it is not a race which requires too much final training. A three-quarter mile training such as I have outlined above will have got you in tip-top condition, and after slacking off for a week or so I would suggest a steady course of half-, three-quarter-, mile-, and mile-and-a-quarter spins. These should be daily work, but about one practice a day would be sufficient. For sprinting practice, to finish up with, take the last 100 yards or so of each spin at a burst, and rest content with that. The main thing is to get thoroughly fit, well, and good first, and then to confine yourself to such work as will keep you so. You are in for a hard job, and will have so much taken out of you by the race itself that you must be careful not to dig too deeply into your reserves of energy beforehand.

RUNNING THE MILE

In the actual race you want to go off with a burst so as to get clear of the ruck, but must steady up early - but not later than 30 or 40 yards - and then stride along evenly and well to the home straight; after that it is hell-for-leather. A regular, even stride is, perhaps, more important in the mile than it is even in the 10 miles, for you must not pump or distress yourself in any way. At the long distance you will have several chances of picking up again, but these won't be accorded in the mile itself.

If you are out record-breaking it may be worth while to quote George's times in 1886 in order to show how evenly the race must be run. W. G. did his first quarter in 58 1/2 secs., the second in 63 1/2 secs., the third in 65 3/4 secs., and the last in 65 secs.; time, all over, 4 - min. 12 3/4 secs. If this feat is to be surpassed a fraction will, I think, have to be knocked off the first quarter, and a full second, or nearly as much, from the last. It is all very well to theorise, however; but, nevertheless, I think it can be done, and I am sure that George himself would be the first to congratulate the man who did it.

8 Middle Distances - From 2,000 Yards to Four Miles

Training for these middle distances, as I have called them, will be all pretty much on a par, the length of the trial spins constituting the sole difference. They are wearying races, as they are naturally run at a faster pace throughout than the long-distance ones, and resemble rather the mile in some respects.

Now, 2,000 yards on paper does not look much longer than 1,760, but there is a real difference when one comes to run it. That extra 240 yards takes some doing at a fast pace, and no runner yet known has been able to do a mile in anything like record time and last out decently for the balance of the 2,000 yards.

As evidence of this, compare George's mile record with my own for the 2,000 yards, viz., 6 min. 7 1-6 secs., or only a shade under 66 secs. for the 440 yards. One record is professional, whereas mine was made as on amateur; but there is little or no difference between the paid and unpaid man on the running path. The only pull which the former may be said to possess is that he has greater leisure and opportunities for training than the average amateur, advantages which do not exist in the case of a Varsity man or any other amateur who lives and works near a track and can take time off when he wishes for training purposes.

As another comparison it may be mentioned that the one-and-a-quarter-mile world's record is 6 min. 30 secs., or over 77 secs. for the fifth quarter, supposing Lang to have run the mile part in George's time, which, of course, he didn't, and couldn't have done if he wanted to last out the one and a quarter miles. My own amateur one-and-a-quarter-mile record (which is world's amateur) is 7 secs. longer than Lang's American one, but then I wasn't going for that record particularly on that occasion, and have never laid myself down to be a world's champion at middle distances.

This somewhat lengthy preamble has been introduced here in order to give my reasons for recommending severe training for these middle distances. They are more than likely to be punishing distances, and so necessitate a competitor's sparing no pains to get himself into the best of trim.

In order to do this he must set aside quite four or five weeks for severe preparation, making his practice spins for the 2,000 yards a series of varying spins, working from 1,600 yards up to one and a-half miles and back again. The actual 2,000 yards itself should also be run over every now and then at a good fast pace, taking the quarters at about 66 secs., 70 secs., 72 secs., 73 secs., and leaving 32 secs. for the final 240 yards gallop. This is only given as a standard to train to, and works out at about 6 secs. over my own record, so that there is a fair margin which could he cut down in the actual race.

The two miles training would be run through in much the same style working up from one and a-quarter miles to three miles and back again, with, of course practice for the actual two miles itself. In all these middle-distance races it is as well to remember that the practice spins should not be run at too fast a pace. No man can go on running several miles a week (say eight or nine and sometimes more) at a fast pace every time. Don't kill yourself trying

to beat the clock, but run long, steady, striding runs three or four times a week, sprinting out now and then just to keep your pace up to the mark, and go for longish brisk country walks as often as you can. Get as much into the open air as circumstances will allow, live regularly, and adhere to the dietary scheme. Your actual trial spins will, of course, have to be fast, but these should not be repeated too frequently. Remember that they are trials and not training, and be content with one only, or at most two, supposing your training period to be a reasonably long one.

Training for three- or four-mile races, as also for any intermediate distances, should be carried out on the same principles. For three miles run from two miles up to four and back again, and for four miles from three miles up to five and back, observing the other directions, slightly altered to suit the circumstances of the case.

HOW TO RUN A MIDDLE-DISTANCE RACE

For a 2,000 yards race, or any other up to a two-mile one, stride off at first short and quick, keeping the feet as close to the ground as possible, gradually lengthening out 6 in. or 1 ft. at a time until you are covering from 4 ft. 10 in. to 6 ft. each stride. Keep this up well until the time comes for your sprint home. This should preferably be as long as you can make it, or perhaps it may be put more clearly by saying that this final burst of yours should start as early as possible. Middle-distance runners are not as a rule well practised in long sprinting, so that if you have devoted your attention to running at pretty nearly top speed for, say, 300 yards during your training and can manage to pull out a burst of that length to finish with, after having gone a whole mile or a mile and a-half, or thereabouts, you will in all probability leave your opponents standing still. The times given in my suggested standard trial spin gave some indication of this, but these times would naturally depend very considerably on circumstances in the actual race itself. You should be fairly well up to the leaders when you start going away, and unless you want to spoil your sprint by getting into that position, should have got there early, and should, further, have stayed there.

For a three- or four-mile race stride out about 4 ft. 10 in. for the first half-mile, then lengthen out to 6 ft. up to two and a-quarter to two and a-half miles. After that drop down to 4 ft. 6 in., going easy and gathering your forces for a wild dash over the last quarter. It is an awfully punishing way of finishing, I know, but if you have trained up for it and can pull it out you will easily spredeagle your field, since very few runners would care to plan out and train for such a smashing style of covering the distance.

9 Long-Journey Races, Such as the Marathon and Others

THE MARATHON

Since its revival (or, perhaps, its institution) with the revived Olympic Games this celebration of an historic event has received a tremendous amount of attention more, I think, than it deserves in some respects.

It is a long distance, no doubt; being run over a road track of 26 miles 170 yards, but Sherring's performance in 1906 of 2 hours 51 min. 23 3-5 secs. was really, after all, nothing so wonderful. Compare it with J. A. Squires' amateur record in May, 1885, of 2 hours 47 min. 14 secs. for 26 miles, which is nearly 4 min. behind Mason's professional record in 1881, and it doesn't stand out as being so very big. I am aware that Sherring ran over an ordinary road, under a blazing sun, and amid clouds of dust, and that Squires and Mason ran on tracks; but when the improved modern methods of training are taken into consideration I fail to see why some Briton should not arise and cut down all the existing records.

Practically all the long-journey records, both professional and amateur, excepting of course, the freak ones of eighty miles and so on upwards, are held by British runners, so that I fail to see why we should not take advantage of what I believe to be a special quality of ours, and carry off this Olympic event at least pretty regularly.

Granted that it is run under a hot sun. Well, wouldn't most athletes sooner run in warm weather. The muscles are looser then, and the action is much freer.

Certainly our amateurs don't lay themselves out for any races over ten miles as a rule, but that is no reason why they should not do so, seeing that the course is much less severe than many people imagine. Staying power is, of course, the great thing to be considered, and practically the whole of one's attention should be devoted to developing this quality.

TRAINING FOR A LONG-JOURNEY RACE

The principal item is walking. Get out for a sixteen-mile walk three or four times a week, and walk at a good steady four-and-a-half-miles-an-hour pace. On the other days go eight miles only at about five miles an hour, saving one day for a sixteen-mile steady road run. Keep this up for a month or six weeks, and then go harder for the last month. Lengthen your run to twenty miles or even twenty-five miles, and do this either twice a week, or three times in a fortnight. Do all the running practice on the road, so as to harden your muscles. Lengthen out the walks also during these last four or five weeks, making them twenty or twenty-five miles twice a week, and twelve to fifteen miles on the other days. Pace won't matter so much, so you can leave all sprinting practice severely alone. It is the distance and not the pace that in going to kill in a long-journey race.

When the contest itself comes off get away at a long, slow, steady stride - one that you can keep up indefinitely. Don't lift your feet too high or try and tire yourself in any way. The best action, not the prettiest, is the one to cultivate, and every care must be taken to avoid jarring the muscles.

Let your arms hang down and loose, and bend forward just enough to help you along. Run as near as possible as you could imagine yourself running in your sleep, without exertion and without fatigue.

Don't worry to any extent about your relative position. You will, or should, have so habituated yourself as to be able to cover the distance in inside the records (which, as I have said, are far from being wonderful), and can rest content that if you are, as you should feel yourself to be, covering the road or track at the proper pace, the other men who have gone ahead must inevitably come back to you.

Don't listen to the spectators but just keep going. If you entertain any doubts as to your progress get a few friends to post themselves along the route to give you your time. You can then quicken up if need be, but really there should be no necessity for this, as you should run by instinct, and, as I have suggested, more or less mechanically.

Long-journey races, can hardly be called exciting affairs. There is hardly, if ever, anything of a finish, the winner, as a rule, coming in alone; and if you care to follow out these rules and are physically constituted for the effort, there should be no doubt as to that winner being yourself.

10 Cross-country Running

Of all forms of pedestrianism and, indeed, of all branches of athletics there can be nothing superior to cross-country running for either pleasure or health. The sport itself is ideal, whether a race be contested in fine or muddy weather. Track or road running is apt to grow monotonous, however exciting it may be; but there is nothing monotonous in an open country run.

Even the training itself is almost as enjoyable as the race, and from first to last I defy anybody to find a single point to cavil at.

The varying nature of the ground covered, moreover, assists enormously in building up one's physique and in bringing into play every individual group of muscles, so that the long-distance track-runner will be well advised to devote a fair portion of his attention to field races, as they will materially assist his progress.

CROSS-COUNTRY TRAINING

The track must naturally be abandoned altogether for cross-country preparation, and one's practice carried out pretty religiously over country as closely resembling that on which the actual race will be contested as can be found within easy distance.

Work your spins up in length from about five miles, then eight miles to ten miles, and vary backwards and forwards. Run in company wherever possible, and pick out as much bad and heavy ground as you can; but run three times every week. Get out by yourself if necessary and accustom yourself well to ploughed fields and soft ground, because you want to get into the habit of covering this in quick style.

In actual races themselves it is always best to sprint over the difficult country, and to save yourself when the going is good. You won't tire yourself half as much by following this method.

Going slovenly over ploughed fields or soft ground will lead you into slipping and stumbling, and will take it out of you badly; so cultivate a quick stride of about 4 ft. 10 in. for these sections, and try and let your feet land about halfway up each furrow. If you try and land on the top or between them you will shake yourself, to say nothing of running a risk of missing your footing and breaking your stride.

When you get back to level ground again you can slow down, but at the same time lengthen out your stride to even as much as 6 ft. 6 in. There is not the same necessity to preserve all-through regularity of action over this style of course.

Another important point to study is the nature of the actual course itself. Get all the information on this point that you can, and lay your plans and train accordingly. If there is likely to be a lot of bad ground pay special attention to this part of your work, and adapt your training also in the matter of hills.

Run up all the hills at a fairly slow pace so as to have wind, and come down them as hard as you can, partly to make up for this, and also because it is less exhausting to run down hill fast.

WATER, GATES, FENCES, AND HEDGES

Never hesitate to clear these boldly. You will only waste time if you run about looking for openings, and, if possible, run over your gates and stiles in preference to vaulting or jumping them. This will want some practice, but is well worth getting into the knack of doing. Run right up, plant your front foot on the middle bar, step clean over with the other, jump down, and go on. This method may not sound so speedy a method of progression as a jump or a vault, but it very frequently saves a lot of time; for in many instances the obstacle may present itself just after a ploughed field or stretch of very, heavy ground, which has taken it out of you badly, and so will not improbably cause you to badly mull your early attempts to vault or jump.

In fact, you will notice that every practical cross-country runner runs over his obstacles. It is only when he gets a bit pumped that he “vaults,” or gets over as best he can.

Cross-bars and other incidentals may occasionally assist or hamper this “running over” business, and of course from many other reasons it is always advisable to indulge in plenty of jumping practice.

This can be obtained wherever opportunity presents itself, but, failing a decent supply of hedges, gates, etc., in the near neighbourhood of your training quarters, as a substitute it is not a bad plan to set up a number of hurdles in any adjacent field, and to steadily practice jumping these one after the other.

You may not impossibly be a hurdler, or possibly may possess undreamt-of qualities at that sport, which this cross-country running and training will introduce to you.

The Americans are, as a rule, better hurdle racers than we are, so that you may be sure of gratitude if you discover that you can develop yourself into one. Your advent as a champion, or as a prospective one, would be very warmly welcomed.

Therefore for this reason, as well as on account of your cross-country chances and general all-round agility, don't neglect any opportunity of improving your jumping abilities. Practice broad as well as high jumping, so as to prepare yourself for water and possible thick hedges. When the weather is very wet, or you are for any other reason confined indoors, you might devote any spare time you have to jumping over forms ranged round the biggest room you can practice in.

This may not sound very important, but, like every other thing of the kind, it will help, if only in developing a springiness of action.

STITCH

This malady is one to which all runners are liable. In ordinary races, it is usually a fatal complaint, but need not necessarily be so across country. If, however, an attack should come on, don't allow it to overwhelm you. Keep on going. Slacken speed, walk even if necessary, but keep going on. You will be losing as little ground as possible, and will be gradually, if slowly, working off the attack. You may want to lie down and die, but don't. Keep on getting ahead and quicken up as the pain diminishes, until you find yourself back at your normal pace, with the stitch departed.

11 A Few Special General Training Hints

A FEW SPECIAL GENERAL TRAINING HINTS FOR ALL DESCRIPTIONS OF RACES, TOGETHER WITH A FEW ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON DIET, MASSAGE, BATHING, ETC., ETC., WITH WHICH IS INCLUDED A SERIES OF DO'S AND DONT'S

DIET

I am inclined to fancy that I have more than once repeated myself over that vexed question of diet, in spite of the fact that I have endeavoured to avoid doing this as far as possible, knowing that all such repetitions must become dreadfully monotonous.

But, at the risk of being called to order on this account, I would again strictly recommend every class of runner to follow out as nearly as possible the rules and regulations in this respect laid down in Chapter 3. I have mentioned that sprinters alone that is to say, 100 yards and 120 yards sprinters need not strain themselves in observing these precepts. They will be well advised if they do follow them out, certainly, but can, if they care to unnecessarily shorten their careers, pass them by fairly lightly.

Nevertheless, they will not be able to keep thoroughly fit and in good condition if they wander very far away from the path I have laid down for them, and will suffer accordingly.

Sprinters, of course, stand apart from every other branch of athlete, inasmuch as their powers and qualities, save in a very few particulars, are innate. For if they were not born with the capacity to cover a short distance in very nearly even time, no amount of training will ever develop that quality. Despite this, they will, I believe, admit that their natural powers are susceptible of improvement, and, further, that this improvement can only be brought about by a hard course of training.

Now no man can undergo this satisfactorily unless he is in the pink of condition, and to get into this desirable state, still more to remain there, he must exercise a certain amount of discretion.

For pedestrians at every other distance there is only one possible routine of eating and drinking, and that is the one I have laid down. It isn't my own discovery, needless to say, but is the result of centuries of practical experience. Numerous other systems have been tried, but this is now universally accepted as being not only the best but as being the only one.

Slight variations may be introduced. Cocoa, water, or weak tea may be substituted for coffee, but, personally, I have found the latter to be the best, just as I have found Bovril to be the best form of taking a concentrated liquid nourishment.

In the face of the teetotallers I have recommended an occasional glass of old ale, and I am firmly of the impression that the athlete who indulges in an occasional glass of this will, other things being equal, derive greater benefits thereby than the man who preserves and adheres to a rigid teetotalism.

Never touch spirits of any kind. They are the worst thing an athlete can go in for. They are of no earthly use, and can only work serious harm.

Then the running man who doesn't smoke is better off than the man who does. Smoking can never do one's wind any good, but I would not like to assert that one or two cigarettes, or say one pipe a day, will do a man any harm. Indeed, they may sometimes take his mind off training altogether for the time being - in the evening when he shouldn't be worrying about it - and will in that manner prove of a certain amount of benefit; but when a man has cut himself down to one pipe or a couple of cigarettes only per diem - and no runner must exceed that limit - he will probably drop smoking altogether, and will benefit accordingly.

RELAXATION DURING TRAINING

Still, training does get on a man's nerves. There is no use or profit in denying it. It is all very well to tell a man that he ought to enjoy his training, and look upon it as the happiest time of his life; but even if you can get him to believe you, you will have difficulty in persuading him to act as though he did.

Where it will tell worst and do most damage is in the evenings, after the day's work is over, and he has nothing to do but brood over the thing that is chiefly occupying his mind - which is the progress he is making.

The wise trainer will never allow his charge to think about this, for if he does the progress will soon switch round into retrogression. His attention must be drawn to other subjects. He probably won't read, because he can't bring his mind to bear upon any book. He won't talk sensibly, because he won't be able to think about anything but the forbidden subject, so he must be lured on to something that will attract his attention.

A game of billiards is about the best subject if he plays the game, but, failing that, chess, draughts, or cards may serve as a decent substitute.

If everything else fails, and you can't pack him off to bed and to sleep (for it is not much use doing one without the other), take him out to the theatre. Select the most exciting or interesting play you can find, and let him devote his attention to that.

You may have to break into his regular bedtime by so doing, but must risk it just for the occasion, as he must be broken of any brooding tendency at once.

Fortunately, however, a man in hard training will generally be only too ready for sleep, so that this particular malady is only likely to make its appearance when he is taking a rest owing to running stale. It will then come down with double violence, and the billiards, etc., or theatre remedies must be resorted to at once. The interference with the sleeping hours won't matter so much then while he is having a slack time as they would at others.

AIDS TO TRAINING IN OTHER SPORTS

Between training seasons, and even while these are in full swing, an athlete may assist his preparation by indulging in an occasional game of cricket or a practice game of football. In the last-mentioned game he should be careful to avoid running any risks of damage, so should not engage in an actual match however greatly he may be tempted. Nevertheless despite the risk, practice football is well worth attention. A man gets into the trick of being remarkably quick on his feet, and can obtain some gloriously exciting sprints down the touch-line, which will be quite free from the monotony frequently attaching to a solitary practice burst on the track.

But it would not be wise to go in even for a practice game just before a race. Accidents to knees and other joints may occur even on those occasions.

I have generally contrived to keep myself pretty fit during the summer by sticking to cricket. The tip-and-run variety of the game is good fun and good practice, while the more serious side is not devoid of use.

I cannot lay claim to having made any history as a batsman, but I used to bowl above a bit, and among my other prizes am very proud of the cricket ball which was presented to me in commemoration of my capturing seven wickets for 16 runs in one of the Jockeys versus Champion Athletes games at the Oval.

The only two outdoor sports which I would condemn for athletics are cycling and swimming. Swimming is wonderfully healthy, I know, and is an excellent method of developing the chest and lungs, but it nevertheless does make a man slow, since it stiffens his leg muscles.

Cycling, however, is about the worst possible form of exercise for a running man. The muscles developed thereby are positively inimical to running. They grow fixed and hard, and hamper all quick movements terribly. Besides which, a runner wants a long, steady stride, not a series of pernickety little steps such as cycling encourages.

SIDELIGHTS ON TRAINING

Skip every day, and skip fast. Get a rope and keep going for twenty or thirty minutes if possible, putting in from 2,000 to 3,000 skips, if not more. This exercise will prevent your becoming stiff and muscle-bound, and is as valuable to the running man as it is to the boxer, and is so precisely for the same reason. Both have to be particularly smart on their toes and able to keep going for indefinite periods without growing leg-weary. Unless one is really fagged out, it isn't a bad plan to put in this turn with the skipping rope on the completion of every training practice before going off home. Otherwise, it should be put in during the morning at any odd time, and particularly on "off days," just to prevent one's going too slack.

GET YOUR TRAINER TO MASSAGE YOU THOROUGHLY

Every good trainer should also be a good masseur. This is one of the most important items in his profession. For as soon as a man gets back off the track, and has finished his practice for the time being, he should have the conveniences ready for a lukewarm bath.

Lukewarm, mind; not hot or cold. A shower, of course, is best of all, but, failing that, he should have a thorough sponge down, and should then be well rubbed (scrubbed if you prefer) with a warm, rough towel, so as to freshen up his nerves and muscles. Towels are best, and infinitely preferable to the mittens which some runners use.

When this has been done very thoroughly the runner should then lie down and allow all his muscles to go slack and loose while his trainer massages him all over, stroking, rubbing, punching, and slapping every muscle and sinew in the body so as to keep them soft and loose.

He can, and should, then be well rubbed down with a spirit embrocation, standing up for this operation. He can assist in this himself, as the extra exertion will encourage and brisk up the circulation.

Put on plenty of warm clothing, including a fairly thick sweater, and walk briskly home.

GUARD AGAINST CHILLS

This, by the way, is an unnecessary risk, which many athletes foolishly incur, particularly during the intervals between training runs, between heats at a meeting, or while watching other events. A man seems to think that as long as he dons a sweater or a thick flannel jacket, and so protects the upper part of his body, that he will be impervious to cold, quite oblivious of the fact that his success will be mainly achieved by his leg muscles, and that these are (on this account if for no more) every whit as important as his heart action.

The warmer muscles are the more easily they move. The blood flows to them and courses round them more freely, conveying the needed nutriment far more readily and freely when its action is not rendered sluggish and thereby impeded by cold. You must all be aware that supposing you have fallen and hurt yourself, or have been kicked at football or otherwise contused, that you can stave off the consequent bruise and stiffness by keeping in motion. Bruises and stiffness are the result of congealed blood, and if the flow can be kept constant and rapid they cannot manifest themselves.

So whether you have just run, jumped, thrown a hammer, or put a weight, or are about to perform any of these feats, you should avoid standing still, and should pay equal attention to the item of immediately covering up the whole of your body.

Let your trainer be in close attendance with a long bath robe or dressing-gown which will envelope you from your head to your feet, and don this immediately, both before emerging from your dressing-room and as soon as you have "pulled up" from a spin, whether practice or in a race. Doff it only before you are going into your bath prior to dressing.

Don't pay any attention to any desire you may entertain to let the wind play about your body. You can indulge in all the "air baths" you wish for at other times. They are out of place either just before or just after exercise. You are, or should be, perspiring freely then, and the discharge of waste tissue through the pores of your skin is at all times a healthy discharge, which should only be terminated or checked in any way in a warm (but not too warm) bath.

FOLLOW EXPERT ADVICE

In pouring out all this wealth of instruction I am fully aware that my readers may not have been constructed on exactly the same lines as I was myself, and on that account I have endeavoured to make these hints as catholic as possible. I have tried to cover the whole ground, but am nevertheless conscious that I may have omitted to do so successfully in one or two instances. Besides this, it is by no means impossible that improvements may be discovered from time to time. We have not yet heard the last word on running, and shall very possibly still be waiting for it for centuries to come. For this reason I would advise all my readers to seek out the most experienced trainer they can find - some such man as Harry Andrews; in short, a man who may be said to know pedestrianism backwards, and to accept his advice and instruction in every detail.

Two heads (when they are both good ones) are always better than one, and a pedestrian's attention will, as a rule, be so fixed on the means by which he can get over the ground quicker than his rivals that he will not improbably omit to notice that he is perhaps killing himself in the process. It is his trainer's duty to notice this, and to stop his man getting ahead too fast. Getting to his best several days before the race won't benefit a man much. He wants to get there on the actual day itself, and he must remember that training - scientific training - is designed to achieve that end. No man can stay at his best for any considerable length of time, and, as his keenness and enthusiasm should preclude his recognition of the impossibility of his being "better than his best", he must necessarily rely on his trainer for the wise graduation of his training. Remember above all things that you are running for your club even more than for yourself, and that your trainer will remember this at the moments when you yourself are liable to forget it.

ON STARTS IN HANDICAPS

Never despair because you fancy that you have been unfairly treated by the handicapper. It is very difficult to handicap a really good man out of a race altogether.

During my own career I have had to concede some seemingly impossible starts. Four hundred and seventy yards in two miles, and 600 yards in three miles, are pretty lengthy backwardations to have to make up. But I have had worse to face than this.

When making my, ten mile record I was conceding seven or eight minutes' start to the limit man. I am not very clear as to the actual start I was giving, and I cannot at the moment lay my hand on the figures, but I am sure that I am in no way overstating the facts. I have, indeed, given more than this seven minutes odd (if not more), which was the longest start

ever given at Ibrox. For in one ten miles cross-country run I can remember that the limit man set off nine and a-half minutes before I did, say a two miles start in ten.

Nevertheless, on each of the occasions cited I managed to finish first man home. The length of the starts may have forced me to run more to race and less to record, but I don't think so. I had set my heart on making history in the Ibrox race, and the fact that I succeeded in my ambition should serve as a useful guide to all runners. I thereby dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's" of several of the maxims contained in this book, seeing that by laying myself down to cover the course inside all records I not only succeeded in compassing that end, but also in out-distancing all my opponents.

Go thou, oh reader, and do likewise - on all occasions. It rests not with your stars, but with yourselves, whether you be champions or not.

SOME LAST WORDS ON STRIDE

I may, perhaps here utter a final and really important warning to my readers to carefully refrain from all temptation either to acquire or to demonstrate any distinctive running "form"; for that is a rock on which they will be bound to split. Critics talk and write enthusiastically on "long, springing" strides, of men who "move freely from their hips," and whose magnificently free action simply devours the ground. These critics mean well, no doubt, but they don't do long-distance running any good.

For however pretty this stylish running may look, it speedily brings on leg-weariness. A man who "throws out" his fore-leg is bound to tire his knee-joints, while the man who strides high and long, covering 7 ft., or 8 ft. at a stride, will in the long run cover his ground at a greater exertion than the man who lifts his feet and body clear from the track for as short a while and as little as possible.

A high, springing stride inevitably means a jarring return to earth, to say nothing of a straining of the joints employed. Then the upright, erect carriage of the body inseparable therefrom involves the extra exertion of carrying a dead weight along.

The long-distance runner has to last out for as long as he can, and must therefore economise his powers as much as possible. He should run from his knees rather than from his hips, and should, moreover, do this as easily as possible. He should not lift his feet far off the track, because he wants to get them back there again as quickly as possible. He wants to lean his body forward also, just beyond the balancing point, in order to obtain the propulsion of his top hamper.

All this is rather difficult to explain on paper, but it seemed to me to be worth while going into in order that I might explain my reasons for recommending a style of running which is so diametrically opposed to all the accepted ideas on the subject. Long striding and high striding, of course, may both be all very well for the sprint or short-distance runner, who has to get over the ground as fast as he can, and who must perforce run in the style which suits him best, since he is a natural rather than a developed runner; but for any distance over a

mile (or, to my mind, for any course over the half-mile) I am perfectly satisfied that the short, quick, gliding action is far and away the best.

I have been running now for a good many years - a good ten, shall we say, since I joined the Horsham Blue Star Harriers and won my first mile handicap - and during the time which has elapsed since I have participated in all sorts of races over all sorts of courses in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and elsewhere, with a pretty fair measure of success.

I have no particular physical development to boast about, and have sometimes been described as being rather insignificant in appearance - circumstances which have from time to time apparently occasioned a certain amount of wonder, on the grounds, I suppose, that it seemed impossible for so slightly-built a person as myself to have established so many records, and these particularly of a kind which are generally associated with considerable strength and stamina.

Well, I have husbanded such physical powers as I possessed, and have sought out such ways and means as would enable me to put them to the best possible use and profit.

In so doing I have succeeded in convincing myself that the action, system of training, and methods of running a race were not only best adapted to my own physical peculiarities, but were also so reasonable and common-sensible (if I may say so) as to commend themselves to each and every man who seeks distinction on the running track.

I may, or may not be, correct in this opinion, but anyway you now have it, and can judge for yourselves.

12 Alfred A. Shrubb, Champion of the World: A Brief Word Sketch by J. Murray

ALFRED A. SHRUBB, CHAMPION OF THE WORLD

"The Little wonder;" as he has been so frequently styled, is probably the most extraordinary athlete the world has ever seen. To look at him, you would never imagine that he was anything out of the ordinary.

He is just a slim built, slight, almost flimsy looking little fellow, but on closer examination you discover that he is wondrously beautiful in make. There is not much of him, it is true, but what there is of him is of the finest possible quality. The muscles of his legs are small in circumference, but, on the other hand, singularly long, and, owing to his small bulk, have little or no weight to carry over the ground.

It is the upper portion that bothers one. True, it is in proportion to his lower limbs, but the mystery which assails the observer is the difficulty of discovering where he packs all his lung power away.

This must be prodigious, or otherwise he would never have been able to successfully perform all the wonderful feats which he has chalked up to his credit.

In fact, the only conclusion which one can come to is, that he must be the most scientific and at the same time the most scientifically trained, runner who has ever taken to either the track or cross-country.

His action when running has been described as being the most ugly in existence. This is not a fair definition by any means, but is nevertheless worth quoting, since it emphasises the individuality of his style.

Whether it be or not ugly is a matter of but little importance. There are no canons in existence by which it can be judged, that is to say, canons of running art, or at least if there are I have never heard of them. There is, or rather has been, an accepted style of covering the ground, and Shrubb's does not conform to that style. That is all.

Future ages may possibly decide that Shrubb's style is like the Venus of Milo, in that it was not invented in accordance with the canons, but, on the contrary, that it invented them. For the present we may safely say that there is Shrubb's and that there are other styles. Prettier, perhaps (which is a matter of taste), but certainly not so effective.

Born at Slinfold, in Sussex, on the 12th of December, 1879 he first discovered that he was in any way remarkable as a runner by easily beating a fire engine, which was tearing along to a fire some three or four miles away. Shrubb was first, the engine second, and the other runners nowhere.

Fired with ambition, he prepared himself for his career on the lines which he has laid down in this book. His closest companion in that fire engine race was F. J. Spencer, the champion

of the local club, the Horsham Blue Star Harriers, which club Shrubbs joined in 1898, his first race being for the mile handicap, in which he was conceded 66 yards by Spencer, beating him by 80 yards, and winning the race in 4 min. 38 secs.

In another mile race, three weeks later, he had to give Spencer 60 yards start, and yet won by 26 yards.

In the same year he entered for the Sussex County Championships, and carried off the mile, three-mile, and four-mile events, much to his surprise and delight.

Since that date his career can only be described as a blaze of triumph, with the exception of having to rest content with third place in the four mile championship at Stamford Bridge in 1900, when his comparative failure was entirely due to inexperience, although when it is mentioned that the first two places were occupied by Messrs. J. T. Rimmer and C. Bennett and that Shrubbs was only 20 yards behind Rimmer, it wasn't such a terrible defeat after all.

To attempt to describe his various feats would occupy too much space, but it may be mentioned as evidence of the versatility of his powers that he won the following English championships: the One Mile in 1903 and 1904; the Four Mile in 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904; and the Ten Mile in 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904; that he won the Southern Cross-Country Championship in 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904; the International Cross-Country in 1903, 1904; and the National in 1901, 1902, 1903, and 1904.

Besides all these he is the holder of a tremendously long list of records, as witness: - 2,000 yards, 6 min. 7 1-6 secs.; 1 1/4 miles, 5 min. 37 secs. (world's amateur records); 1 1/2 miles, 6 min. 47 3-6 secs. (British amateur); 1 3/4 miles, 8 min. 21 secs.; 4,000 yards, 10 min. 67 3-6 secs. (world's amateur); 2 miles, 9 min. 9 3/4 secs. (world's professional and amateur); 2 1/4 miles, 10 min. 42 secs.; 2 1/2 miles, 11 min. 66 secs.; 2 3/4 miles, 13 min. 10 secs.; 3 miles, 14 min. 17 3-6 secs. ; 3 1/4 miles, 15 min. 43 secs.; 3 1/2 miles, 16 min. 57 2-6 secs.; 3 3/4 miles, 18 min. 12 4-6 secs. ; 4 miles, 19 min. 23 2-6 secs.; 4 1/4 miles, 20 min. 50 2-6 secs.; 4 1/2 miles, 22 min. 6 3-6 secs.; 4 3/4 miles, 23 min. 23 3-6 secs.; 5 miles, 24 min. 33 2-5 secs. (all world's amateur and professional records).

Besides these, he holds all world's amateur records from 6 to 7 3/4 miles, and professional and amateur records from 8 to 11 miles, in times which are stated elsewhere in these pages, together with the world's amateur records for 11 1/4, 11 1/2, and 11 3/4 miles, and also for the hour. Even these have not been enough for "the little wonder." He has the 2-mile grass record, 9 min. 17 secs.; the 3-mile grass record, 14 min. 22 2-6 secs.; and the 4-mile grass record, 19 min. 26 4-5 secs., as well, and, what is more surprising, every one of the above records was made as an amateur. Surely a most exceptional list.

Shortly after these last had been established, events occurred which gave rise to considerable discussion at the time, but which need not here be entered upon, adjudicating upon which the A.A.A. saw fit, in their infinite wisdom, to declare Shrubbs a professional runner, and in this capacity he made his debut at Olympia, in a two-mile race against Sid Thomas, D. Chivers, and Fred Parkas. There was a most desperate finish, in which Shrubbs

got home first by a yard in 9 min. 36 1-6 secs.; not very marvellous time, perhaps, but remarkably good, considering the track.

Since that date he has run in all parts of the world, against all sorts of athletes, in all sorts of races. He has even run against a horse. This was a celebrated local trotter named "Patsey," and the race, a ten miles course, took place on the Riverpark track at Winnipeg, in Canada.

They started level, and kept so until the last quarter-mile, when, in a desperate finish, the horse won by 16 yards. Shrubbs's time was 62 min. 20 secs., a long way behind his best, but it was nevertheless a most marvellous performance.

Perhaps his greatest and hardest race was against a relay team of five Americans, each of the latter running two miles against him, Shrubbs running the whole distance. This took place on the 16th of January, 1908, and is perhaps the most remarkable feat in track history. All the Americans were well known local runners, and reckoned about the best in their district, and yet, despite the conditions, only one of them (the fourth) succeeded in getting the better of the little marvel. This man, Curran by name, gained half-a-lap on him in the two miles, but as he had then been running six miles, while Curran started fresh, and as all the other Americans lost at least a lap each in their relays, very little credit went to any one save the Englishman, whose feat may justly be considered as simply unique.

With all his laurels, Alfred Shrubbs is a singularly modest man. He is quiet and unassuming, well aware of his powers certainly, but by no means convinced that they cannot be eclipsed.

Certainly, no runner can point to such a career as his, and it may well be questioned whether his career will ever be equalled. W. G. George's alone can be compared with it, and Shrubbs has even achieved the seemingly impossible by eclipsing even George's fame.

He has won innumerable cups, pianos, plates, shields, clocks, and other prizes of every description, many of these having needed three consecutive wins to annex. The total value of his amateur prizes alone probably approaches, if it does not exceed, £2,000 so that he will have plenty of heirlooms to bequeath to his descendants.

May he bequeath to his country a worthy successor to his fame, and while that successor is developing, may some reader of this book take advantage of his precepts, and preserve the laurels which he has gained, securely within these shores.